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ABSTRACT

A coordinated system of assessment of principals, schools, and teachers can provide a broad base of informative data that can be used to enhance the instructional leadership provided by principals. Under its Education Improvement Act of 1984, South Carolina is incorporating eight elements into its coordinated assessment system: (1) assessment of the instructional leadership potential of candidates for employment as principals; (2) evaluation of the instructional leadership of current principals; (3) determination of principals' eligibility for incentive pay for instructional leadership; (4) assessment of process variables related to instructional improvement and assessment of school instructional goals, both for purposes of school site planning; (5) assessment of individual school performance for comparison with previous performance and with the performance of other groups; (6) determination of schools' eligibility for rewards for demonstrating instructional improvement; (7) evaluation of the instructional practices of teachers and teacher candidates; and (8) determination of teachers' eligibility for incentive pay for instructional performance. The specific characteristics to be evaluated in each of these eight areas are outlined in this document. (PGD)

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Abstract

# Using Assessment Data to Promote the Principal As Instructional Leader

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June 11, 1985

Principals use a variety of assessment data for making decisions and their performance is evaluated using a variety of assessment data. The type of data available can promote, distract or confuse principals in their role as instructional leaders.

A coordinated system of assessments which highlights instruction not only focuses the principal's attention on instructional and curricular improvements, but also provides the principal with leverage to make improvements.

Assessment of variables related to instruction and instructional outcomes should not only be used as a component of the evaluation of the principal for initial and continuing employment, but also for providing incentive awards to principals, teachers and schools. Assessment data also should be a key component in school site planning and evaluation.

These criteria and standards employed in the various assessments should be compatible, and the assessment processes coordinated.

South Carolina, with its Education Improvement Act of 1984, is attempting to develop and implement such a coordinated system of assessments. The papers outline eight elements of a system of assessments being currently developed or implemented in South Carolina.

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## INTRODUCTION

Principals use a variety of assessment data for making decisions and their performance is evaluated using a variety of assessment data. The type of data available can promote, distract or confuse principals in their role as instructional leaders.

A coordinated system of assessments which highlights instruction not only focuses the principal's attention on instructional and curricular improvements, but also provides the principal with leverage to make improvements.

Assessment of variables related to instruction and instructional outcomes should not only be used as a component of the evaluation of the principal for initial and continuing employment, but also for providing incentive awards to principals, teachers and schools. Assessment data also should be a key component in school site planning and evaluation.

These criteria and standards employed in the various assessments should be compatible, and the assessment processes coordinated.

Such a coordinated system of assessments could consist of the following elements:

1. Initial assessment of potential instructional leadership for employment as a principal,

2. Emphasis on instructional leadership in evaluating principals,

3. Incentive pay for instructional leadership,

4. School site planning based on:

    a. Assessment of process variables related to instructional improvement,

    b. Assessment of school instructional goals,

5. Assessment of individual school performance compared to other referenced groups and prior performance,

6. Financial rewards for schools demonstrating instructional improvement,

7. Evaluation of teachers based on promising and effective teaching practices,

8. Incentive pay for teachers demonstrating outstanding instructional performance, and

9. Accreditation systems which stress factors related to instructional improvement.

South Carolina, with its Education Improvement Act of 1984, is attempting to develop and implement such a coordinated system of assessments. What follows is an outline of the features of the first eight elements, being currently developed or implemented in South Carolina.

## PRINCIPAL ASSESSMENT

For Initial Employment (Being pilot-tested in 1984-85)

1. Ability to seek out relevant data and analyze complex information to determine the important elements of a problem situation,

2. Skill in identifying educational needs and setting priorities,

3. Ability to plan, schedule and control the work of others,

4. Ability to recognize when a decision is required and to act quickly,

5. Ability to recognize when a group requires direction, to get others involved in solving problems, to effectively interact with a group, to guide them to the accomplishment of a task,

6. Ability to perceive the needs, concerns, and personal problems of others,

7. Ability to perform under pressure and opposition,

8. Ability to make a clear oral presentation of ideas and facts,

9. Ability to express ideas clearly in writing,

10. Possession of well-reasoned educational philosophy,

11. Showing that work is important to personal satisfaction, and

12. Competence to discuss a variety of subjects (educational,political, economic, etc.)

For Continued Employment and Improvement of Experienced Principals (Being developed)

1. Developing leadership traits needed to accomplish school goals and apply the characteristics of instructional effectiveness in the management of the school,

2. Building positive relationships among school, parents and community,

3. Maintaining a safe, orderly, and positive atmosphere conducive to classroom instruction,

4. Developing personal self-improvement plan,

5. Encouraging effective classroom instruction and high academic achievement, promoting the belief that all students can learn,

6. Developing an effective staff-recruitment, evaluation, inservice education, and staff motivation, and

7. Interacting effectively with others in the school community.

For Incentive Pay (Being developed)

1. Superior performance on the criteria for experienced principals,

2. Student achievement gains over the previous year and maintaining high levels of performance, and

3. Positive school climate.

SCHOOL ASSESSMENT

For Planning (Began 1984-85)

1. Assessment of Outcomes

a. On Statewide data,

i. Achievement test scores,

ii. Student attendance,

iii. Drop-out rate,

iv. For high schools, success of graduates during the first year of college,

v. Accreditation ratings, and

vi. Evaluation of attainment of the objectives in the School Improvement Report for the previous year.

2. Assessment of Factors found in School Effectiveness Research

a. School climate,

b. Instructional leadership of the principal,

c. Emphasis on academics, including the basic skills,

d. Frequent monitoring of student progress and its utilization in curriculum planning,

e. High expectations related to student achievement, and

f. Positive home-school relations.

<u>For Evaluation and Improvement</u> (to be operational 1986-87)

1. Assessment of outcomes

a. Achievement test scores,

b. Student attendance,

c. Dropout rate,

d. Success of graduates in first year of college,

e. SAT performance,

f. Placement of vocational students, and

g. Faculty attendance.

2. **Standards** against which Individual School Performance Would Be Compared

a. Schcols with similar characteristics,

b. Previous years school's performance,

c. State average, and

d. Where applicable, national average.

For Incentive Award (to be operational 1985-86)

1. Outcome Criteria and Standards

a. Significant gain in reading and math performance,

b. Average student attendance of 176 out of 180 instructional days,

c. Average teacher attendance of 176 out of 180 instructional days,

d. Positive student attitude toward learning, and

e. Improved parent participation.

2. Process Criteria

a. Comprehensive needs assessment and short-and long-range plan of school improvement to address needs and problems,

b. Well-articulated and sequenced curricula,

c. Positive school climate,

d. Supportive instructional environment,

e. High expectations,

f. Business and community involvement in the schools, and

g. Clear and focused mission.

## TEACHER ASSESSMENT

For Employment and Improvement of Experienced Teachers (began 1984-85)

1. Long-term planning,
2. Short-term planning,
3. Clarifying rules and procedures,
4. Disciplining in appropriate behavior,
5. Organizing instruction,
6. Clarifying the goals of instruction,
7. Teaching new content,
8. Maintaining student involvement in learning, and
9. Monitoring student progress.

For Incentive Pay (Pilot-test 1985-86)

1. Superior performance on the criteria for the evaluation of experienced teachers,
2. Evaluation of teacher performance as it relates to improved student learning and development,
3. Self-improvement through advanced training,
4. Supplemental professional services which promote cooperation among colleagues, including working with student teachers for collective good of the school,
5. Superior attendance record, and
6. Positive student attitudes and classroom climate.

## CONCLUSION

An improved coordinated system of education assessment is needed in many school districts and states. Such a system should highlight instructional improvement and focus attention on the school site and instructional leadership of the principal. An effective and efficient system must take into account the broad range of assessments which take place formally or informally and affect or involve the principal.

The success of this approach will depend on the capability and skills of educational evaluators, researchers and policy makers to agree on the criteria, standards and procedures of the assessments. The coordination of the various assessments is also very important if this approach is to be successful.